

Harford County Commission on Disabilities

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Meeting Minutes April 23, 2007

Attendance:

Members Present:	Members Absent:	Associate Members Present:
Susan Austin	Angela Barnett	Mary Adkins
Amy Axel	Stacey Hull	Andrea Wiley
Niki Biggs	Gil Kennedy	
Debbie Braam	Joan Loftus	
Buddy Green		
Kathy Halliday		
Councilman Guthrie		
Laurie Kwiedorowicz		
Marc Weinstein		

Helene Dubay, who has been selected as the Commission's recommendation to fill the vacancy in the category of "County Citizen who owns or operates a local business or who is an employee of a local business", was in attendance. Andre Sconion, applicant for the Student Representative to the Commission, was also in attendance, as was "Friend of the Commission", Peter Raimondi.

- I. Special Presentation on the Retirement of Chairperson Buddy Green: Mary Chance, Director, Harford County Department of Community Services, presented outgoing Chairperson Buddy Green a certificate of appreciation from County Executive David R. Craig. Ms. Chance and Vice Chairperson Laurie Kwiedorowicz also presented Mr. Green with a framed collection of photographs and news articles reflecting his many years of service to the disability community in Harford County. Refreshments were served.
- II. Vice Chairperson Laurie Kwiedorowicz called the meeting to order at 5:22 p.m.

Striving for a Better Way of Life for Harford County Citizens with Disabilities



III. Minutes: The minutes of the February 26, 2007 meeting were approved with correction.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Executive Committee:

1. Membership: Kathy Halliday and Marc Weinstein reported on Membership activities:
 - Mary Adkins and Andrea Wiley, who have joined the Commission as Associate Members were introduced;
 - The Commission voted to recommend Andre Sconion to the County Executive to fill the vacancy in the category of "Student Representative". Andre is completing the 11th grade at Aberdeen High School; he is an honor roll student and an athlete. He will serve on the Commission during the remaining months of the 2006/2007 school year and during the 2007/2008 school year.
 - The Commission voted to recommend Debbie Braam and Bob Coen to the County Executive for reappointment to the Commission. Joan Loftus and Stacey Hull have opted to participate as Associate Members, leaving a total of three vacancies in the category of County Citizen with a Disability. (The third vacancy was created by the retirement of Chairperson Buddy Green.)
- B. Accessibility Committee:
 1. Ramps for Renters and Homeowners Program: The first ramp has been constructed. Photographs of the ramp will be provided at the May meeting.
 2. Housing Coalition: No report.
 3. Liriodendron: Accessibility upgrades are in the permitting phase. Bob Coen and Sharon Grzanka will meet with Arden McClune, Parks and Recreation, and Dorothy Francis, Liriodendron, on April 25, 2007, to discuss providing accessibility during upcoming construction.
- C. Education Committee: Debbie Braam reported that:
 - The Expo for Individuals with Disabilities will be held on March 8, 2008 and that the planning committee held its first meeting.

- The Expo has traditionally focused on transitioning youth and their families. The committee hopes to broaden the audience to include students with disabilities who are working toward a diploma. The committee is working to develop a theme focusing on “pathways to the future”.
- Next meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday, May 17, 2007, at 1:00 p.m., at the historic “Bel Air Colored High School”.

D. Government and Community Relations Committee

1. Commission web page: Bob Coen reported on web page activities.
- The Harford County Public Library is the “spotlighted” organization of the month on the Commission’s web page.
- Commissioners are asked to complete a survey about the web page and return to Bob or fax to Sharon Grzanka at 410-803-0433. Sharon will send an electronic copy of the survey to all members.
- Suggestions to increase visits to the Commission’s web page: list upcoming Commission meetings in the Aegis, Baltimore Sun, etc., listing the Commission’s web address; sending letters to agencies inviting them to link to the Commission’s web page. Kathy Halliday volunteered to distribute the Commission’s brochure (with web address) at Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) new client orientations.
2. Commission Brochure Committee: The committee (Angela Barnett, Debbie Braam, and Bob Coen) will meet to begin an update of the Commission brochure.
3. Legislative Committee: Laurie Kwiedorowicz distributed and discussed the final outcome of legislation proposed during the 2007 Maryland General Assembly session.
4. MD Alliance of Local Commissions and Committees on Disabilities: Commissioner Amy Axel attending her first meeting as the Harford County representative to the Alliance. More information to follow.
5. MD Youth Leadership Forum: Three Harford County students have applied to attend the forum this summer at Bowie State University. More information to follow.
6. Transportation Steering Committee: Associate Member Kevin Racine and Sharon Grzanka attended the

Baltimore Area Coordinated Transportation Planning Forum on March 26, 2007 to provide input on the transportation needs of Harford County residents with disabilities.

7. Harford County Town Hall Meeting: The Commission co-sponsors this event along with the Mental Health Association, the Core Service Agency, Service Coordination, NAMI-Harford County, the Harford County Office of Drug Control Policy, Service Coordination, Office on Aging, etc. The 10th annual event will be held on Monday, December 3, 2007, at 6:00 p.m. at the McFaul Center. The next planning meeting will be held on Thursday, May 24, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at the historic "Bel Air Colored High School in Bel Air.

- E. Employment Committee: Co-chair Niki Biggs reported that the Annual Awards Luncheon will be held on Thursday, October 18, 2007, at noon at the Maryland Golf and Country Club. The Barrier Free Design Award has been re-named the Accessibility Award and will be an opportunity to recognize "businesses, facilities, programs, and services in Harford County that have improved the quality of life for individuals with disabilities through accessibility and availability." The next employment committee meeting will be held Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 2:30 p.m. at the historic "Bel Air Colored High School".

IV. Disabilities Coordinator Report: May Commission Meeting: Because the fourth Monday in May is Memorial Day, Sharon booked the historic "Bel Air Colored High School" for Monday, May 21, 2007. She will also check its availability May 29, 30, or 31st and get back to members to confirm the date.

V. Old Business:

VI. New Business:

1. Design for Life – Harford: A voluntary certification program for visitability and livability in single family attached and detached homes. Sharon Grzanka distributed Design for Life –

Montgomery, which is the model for the program. The Harford County Department of Inspections, Licenses and Permits and the Department of Community Services, on behalf of the Commission, will be requesting a change to zoning code to allow accessibility renovations by “right” rather than by variance. More to follow.

2. Election of Officers:

- Laurie Kwiedorowicz submitted the following slate of officers for Commission consideration:
Chairperson Debbie Braam
Vice Chairperson Gil Kennedy
- Laurie invited members to submit nomination and/or to self-nominate. A vote to approve the slate or any other nominees will take place at the May Commission meeting.

VII. Public Comment and Announcements:

- Pete Raimondi announced the MD Human Relations Commission ruled in his favor in his complaint about his condominium association’s refusal to let him add a curb cut. Pete added that he had testified on behalf of Senate Bill 852 – Income Tax – Credit for Motorized Shopping Carts and that his letter to the Editor was published in the Prime Times.
- Niki Biggs announced that the Abilities Network is sponsoring an Epilepsy Awareness Walk on Saturday, June 2, 2007. For more information, contact Niki.

VIII. The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

These minutes are available in alternative format upon request.